



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PONTLLANFRAITH ON THURSDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER 2007 AT 4.30 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Gardiner - Chairman

Councillor D.T. Davies – Cabinet Member for Regeneration

Together with:

I. MacVicar (Business Development Officer), A. Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal), S. Smith (Senior Assistant Engineer), G. Mumford (Environmental Health Officer), R. Campbell (Senior Assistant Engineer) A. Highway (Town Centre Development Manager) J. Elliott (Research Officer) and D. Phillips (Partnership Support Officer).

Also Present:

Mr P. Lambert (Local Business), Mr C. Cook (Access Group)
Messrs C. Sharp and J. Organ and Ms D. Davies (Local Residents)
Mrs E.D. Mantle (Blackwood Town Council)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Blackwood Bus Station had been named Welsh building of the year by CLAW (Consortium of Local Authorities Wales). The bus company Stagecoach will be demonstrating a new bus at the interchange on Monday 3rd December at 10.00am.

Financial support has been obtained to sponsor a River of Light through the town on Thursday 6th December at 6.30pm. Schools have begun to make lanterns and the Round Table will be organising a visit by Father Christmas to the event. All the local churches have been invited to participate and Asda have agreed to a banner publishing the event outside its store. The Group were asked to assist in promoting the event.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record: -

Blackwood Town Centre Management Group held on 26th July 2007.

Matters Arising

4. Traffic Movement – Southern Retail Park (Minute no 3)

It was noted that the legal details had been completed and the developer is expected to be on site next Monday.

5. Bus Traffic Issues – The Interchange (Minute No 8)

A question was raised on the impact of the new interchange and Mr Smith (Senior Assistant Engineer) replied that he had recently received a report from Capita Symonds outlining the impact of the bus station before and after the opening and it was agreed that members of the Group would receive a copy of the report. It is still hoped to organise an official opening ceremony when the plaque for the award discussed earlier could also be unveiled and it would give an opportunity be given to publicise the success of the interchange. Facilities within the interchange were discussed and it was reported that a direct telephone line to the CCTV room at Tiryberth was available for the public to use in emergencies. A concern regarding the availability of the toilets was raised and times were given by local residents when they had been closed. Officers responded that this may be due to maintenance work and also new arrangements to cover lunchtimes of the attendant had recently been addressed. The concerns regarding the toilet facilities in the town centre were discussed and Mr Cook (Caerphilly Access Group) reported that a card may in future be available to people who have a medical condition asking local shopkeepers to let them use their facilities. It was suggested that a temporary sign be placed on the recently closed toilets directing the public to the nearest facilities. It was agreed that a report be brought to the next meeting on all the issues discussed regarding the bus interchange.

6. Timeline Artwork (Minute no 5)

Mr Dallimore (Team Leader – Urban Renewal) reported that the timeline had now been installed throughout the town and that he had received very positive feed back on the scheme from the local schools.

7. CANDO Initiative (Minute no 6)

It was noted that a number of successful activities has been progressed under the recent CANDO initiative. A fuller report will be presented to the next meeting of the Group when issues such as the position of the CCTV camera in the car park near Asda could be discussed.

8. Southern Pedestrian Linkages (Minute no 11)

Mr Dallimore confirmed that the tenders would be completed for this development by the end of the month and that he would expect work to commence by the middle of January.

9. Chartist Fair

It was noted that a report had been prepared on the success of the Chartist Fair. This will form part of a larger report being prepared by the Head of Economic Development regarding events throughout the county borough.

10. CAFÉ CULTURE PILOT

A copy of a report presented to Cabinet on 18th September was presented as information for the Group .It was noted that the Chartist Fayre was particularly well received by café owners in Blackwood who had used the opportunity to encourage new customers by placing tables and chairs on the High Street. Cabinet had agreed the recommendations in the report which suggested that a reduced footway width clearance of 1.8 metres be allowed for a trial period of 6 months. Further details such as design of the demarcation line are being progressed and a number of premises have made inquiries. Officers will liaise with the interested cafes and give advice on appropriate furniture etc.

Concerns were raised regarding the number of obstructions currently being placed on pavements by shop owners and Mr Campbell indicated that he would investigate this matter.

It was noted that the Caerphilly Access Group would be kept informed and consulted on this matter.

11. BLACKWOOD TCIG AUDIT – SEPTEMBER

A number of issues /comments were raised on the following: -

12. Bus Traffic – The Interchange (Page 5)

Mr Cook gave details of a funicular railway scheme (to run from High Street steps to top of town) he was keen to progress but revenue, maintenance costs and possible vandalism would prohibit such a development. Parking and footpath concerns near the vicinity of the interchange area were outlined by the local residents. Mr Smith reported however that a safety audit in this area had been carried out and that a recognised footpath had not be promoted.

13. Footfall Statistics

It was pleasing to note that a local newspaper had reported that the footfall in Blackwood was ahead of the other local towns including Caerphilly.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held in March 2008 and details notified to members of the Group in the New Year.

The meeting closed at 5.35pm

CHAIRMAN